

SCHOOL CLIMATE AND SAFETY

A portion of the survey addressed issues of school climate and safety. Students were asked about the use of physical violence, gangs, and weapon-carrying in their school. In addition, the survey raised questions about their perception of relations among teachers and students, and whether they felt safe at school. Finally, this chapter includes questions on student experience with driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Endorsement of Physical Violence

On the survey, students were asked, “Is it okay to physically hurt someone if they disrespect you or your friends, or call you names?” Results for this item are displayed in Table S1. *About one-fourth of high school students endorsed the use of physical violence in response to being disrespected or called names.* When the margin of error is taken into account, this percentage appears to have changed little compared to previous years. Students in the sixth grade were much less likely to endorse physical violence (10.1%) than were students at the other grade levels.

Table S1
Percentage of Idaho Students Endorsing Physical Violence, 1996-2004

Grade	Idaho 1996		Idaho 1998		Idaho 2000		Idaho 2002		Idaho 2004		Idaho Change Since First Survey
	%	Margin of Error	%	Margin of Error	%	Margin of Error	%	Margin of Error	%	Margin of Error	
Grade 6	9.5	± 1.3	8.7	± 1.4	6.7	± 1.3	8.3	± 1.8	10.1	± 1.2	+0.6
Grade 8	22.0	± 1.7	20.7	± 2.2	17.8	± 2.4	20.5	± 1.8	21.9	± 1.5	-0.1
Grade 10	--	--	28.1	± 3.2	25.6	± 4.7	27.9	± 2.1	26.5	± 1.4	-1.6
Grade 12	25.9	± 2.1	22.2	± 3.3	24.8	± 2.3	24.2	± 2.3	24.2	± 2.0	-1.7

There were important distinctions by gender in how students answered the question about the use of physical violence. In every grade surveyed, *boys were far more likely than girls to endorse the use of violence*, as Figure S1 illustrates.

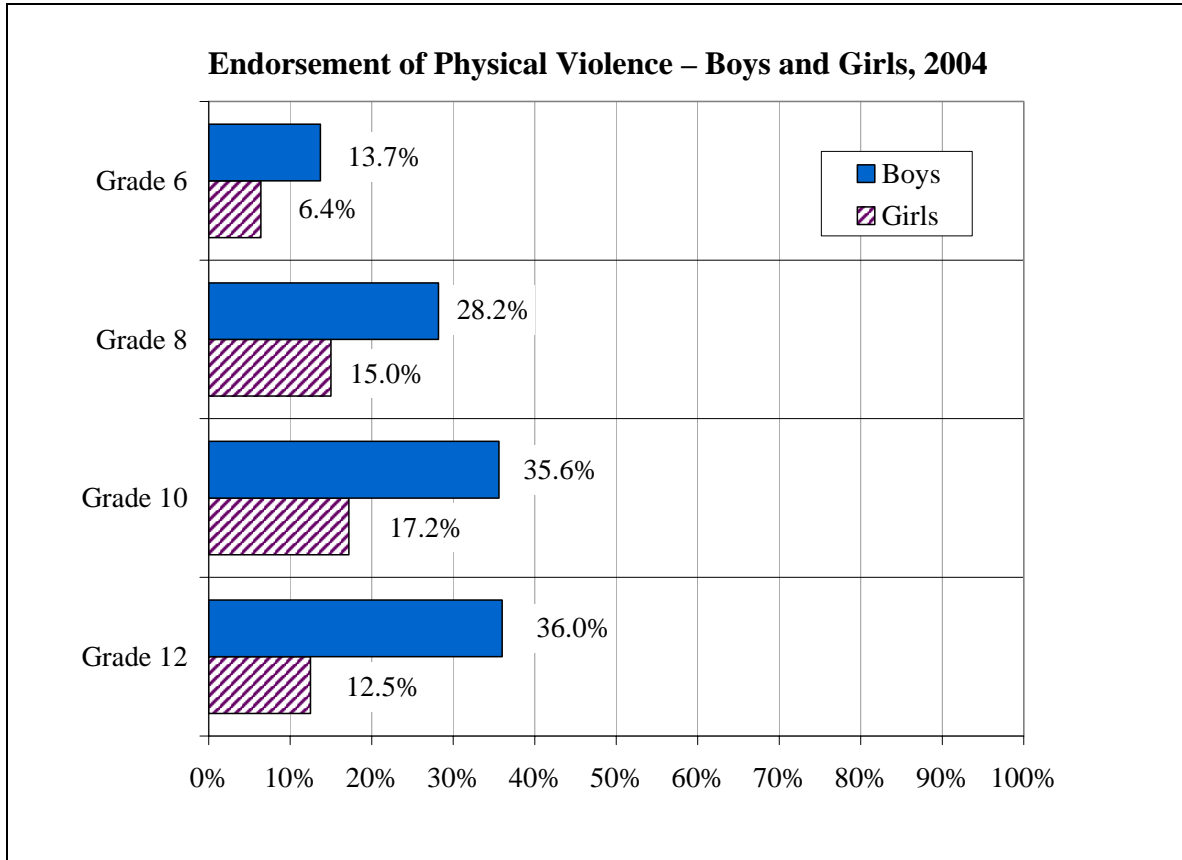


Figure S1

Boys' acceptance of violence increased dramatically between the sixth and eighth grade, and then increased again early in high school, so that by 10th grade, over one-third of boys endorsed violence as a solution to incidents of perceived disrespect. Girls in eighth grade were more likely to endorse violence than were girls in sixth grade. Girls in 10th grade had the highest endorsement of violence of the four grade levels surveyed. Overall, about 12.5 percent of high school senior girls agreed that violence was an appropriate response when they had been disrespected.

In addition, students who reported drug use were much more likely to endorse violence than students who reported no use of drugs were. In every grade surveyed, the higher the reported drug use, the greater was the likelihood that students would endorse the use of violence.

Gangs

Two survey questions raised the issue of gangs. One question asked students whether they believed that gangs caused trouble at their school; the other question asked if students belonged to a gang.

Perception of Trouble Caused by Gangs

Table S2 reflects student responses to the question of whether gangs caused trouble in their schools. Students in the sixth through 10th grades were much more likely than 12th-graders to perceive gangs as a problem.

Table S2
Percentage of Students Reporting that Gangs Cause Trouble in their Schools, 1996-2004

Grade	Idaho 1996		Idaho 1998		Idaho 2000		Idaho 2002		Idaho 2004		Idaho Change Since First Survey
	%	Margin of Error	%	Margin of Error	%	Margin of Error	%	Margin of Error	%	Margin of Error	
Grade 6	23.2	± 3.0	18.4	± 3.3	19.9	± 4.2	26.1	± 3.7	26.5	± 2.1	+3.3
Grade 8	27.0	± 3.6	21.4	± 3.0	16.8	± 3.6	18.4	± 2.5	22.9	± 2.9	-4.1
Grade 10	--	--	12.4	± 2.6	18.6	± 4.0	17.2	± 2.5	22.0	± 5.7	+9.6
Grade 12	14.9	± 4.9	13.9	± 2.9	9.5	± 2.1	9.4	± 1.4	10.2	± 0.8	-4.7

In 2004, across all grades, boys were much more likely than girls were to state that gangs caused trouble at their schools.

Gang Membership

Students were also asked “Are you a member of a gang, posse, crew, or other group which uses violence or threats for any reason (protection, gain acceptance by members, etc.)?” For middle and high school students, between 6 and 9 percent of students said that they belonged to gangs.

Student answers from the 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, and 2004 surveys are summarized in Table S3. For all grades, reports of gang membership remained very similar to 2002 reports. Girls were much less likely to answer that they were members of a gang than boys across all grades.

Table S3
Percentage of Idaho Students Belonging to Gangs, 1996-2004

Grade	Idaho 1996		Idaho 1998		Idaho 2000		Idaho 2002		Idaho 2004		Idaho Change Since First Survey
	%	Margin of Error	%	Margin of Error	%	Margin of Error	%	Margin of Error	%	Margin of Error	
Grade 6	3.9	± 0.8	3.0	± 0.6	2.5	± 0.6	3.7	± 0.9	4.6	± 0.7	+0.7
Grade 8	8.9	± 0.9	8.9	± 2.0	6.1	± 1.5	8.1	± 1.3	7.7	± 0.7	-1.2
Grade 10	--	--	8.7	± 1.6	8.4	± 2.5	9.3	± 1.8	8.5	± 0.6	-0.2
Grade 12	4.9	± 0.6	6.2	± 1.0	6.0	± 1.4	5.9	± 1.4	6.2	± 0.7	+1.3

Weapon-Carrying

The survey asked students several questions about weapons, including whether they had ever carried them, if they had carried them to school, and what type of weapon they had carried.

In all the questions about weapons, boys and girls answered very differently. One question asked “Have you ever carried a weapon, such as a gun, knife, or club for self-protection or because you thought you might need it in a fight?” This question asks about a weapon carried in general, not just to school. A weapon carrying to school is specifically addressed in a later question in the survey. While high school girls were unlikely to report having carried weapons (6.5 percent), almost one-quarter of high school boys (23.9 percent) responded that they had done so at least once.

These differences, shown by grade level, are illustrated in Figure S2. About 18.9 percent of boys as young as sixth grade reported having carried a weapon, and this percentage rose to a peak of 27.3 percent among 10th-grade boys. Among girls, the highest percentage reporting having carried a weapon was the 9.9 percent of 10th-graders who said they had carried a weapon at least once.

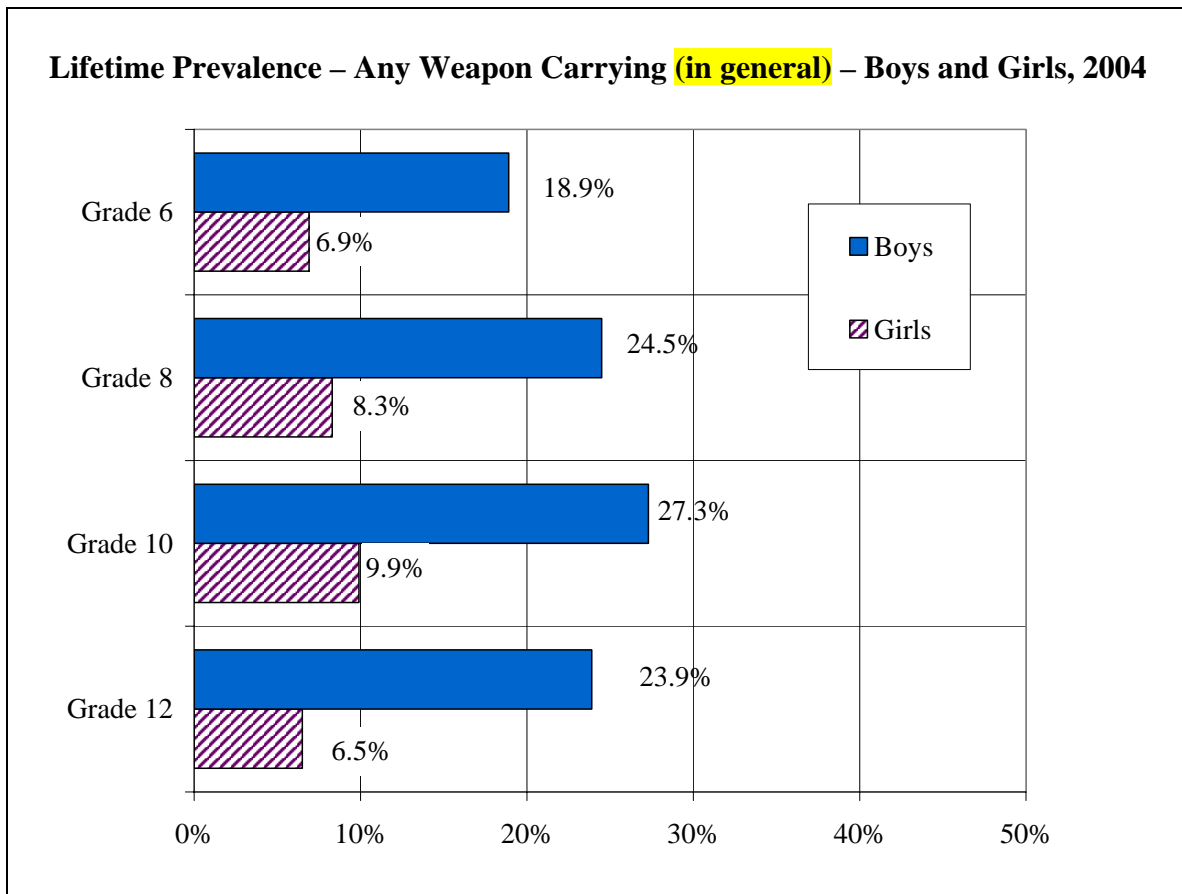


Figure S2

Among students who said they carried a weapon, knives and razors were the weapons most frequently carried. About 14.9 percent of 10th-graders and 12 percent of 12th-graders reported that they had ever carried knives or razors as weapons. Much smaller numbers of students—4.1 percent of 10th-graders, and 4.0 percent of 12th-graders—reported carrying clubs, bats, sticks, or pipes as weapons. Gun-carrying (including handguns, rifles, and shotguns) was reported by 2.5 percent of 10th-graders and 3.4 percent of 12th-graders. Figure S3 displays this information in chart format.

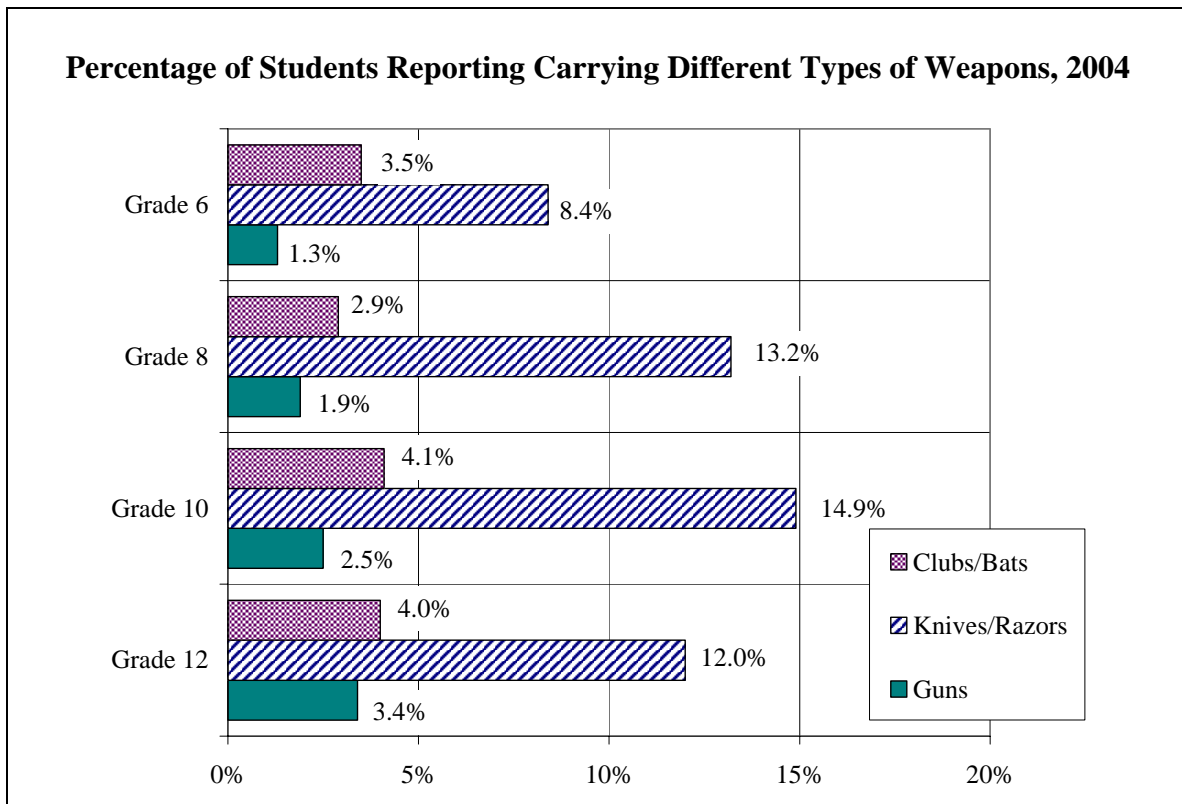


Figure S3

Carrying Weapons to School

Table S4 summarizes student responses to the question “Have you ever carried a weapon to school?” The percentage of sixth-, eighth-, 10th-, and 12th-grade students who reported ever having carried a weapon to school declined compared to 1996, but remained stable from 2002.

Table S4
Percentage of Idaho Students Who Ever Carried a Weapon to School, 1996-2004

Grade	Idaho 1996		Idaho 1998		Idaho 2000		Idaho 2002		Idaho 2004		Idaho Change Since First Survey
	%	Margin of Error	%	Margin of Error	%	Margin of Error	%	Margin of Error	%	Margin of Error	
Grade 6	8.5	± 1.2	6.0	± 0.7	5.8	± 1.0	4.2	± 0.9	4.9	± 0.5	-3.6
Grade 8	17.7	± 1.3	13.7	± 1.6	10.5	± 2.2	9.8	± 1.7	9.9	± 0.7	-7.8
Grade 10	--	--	16.2	± 1.7	15.6	± 3.6	11.8	± 1.4	12.2	± 1.3	-4.0
Grade 12	16.0	± 1.6	12.8	± 2.0	13.0	± 1.7	10.9	± 2.7	10.6	± 1.0	-5.4

The responses of male and female students were very different from one another, as Figure S4 illustrates. *High school boys were 3.5 times more likely than girls to report having carried weapons to school, and about one-sixth of high school boys said they had at some time carried a weapon to school.*

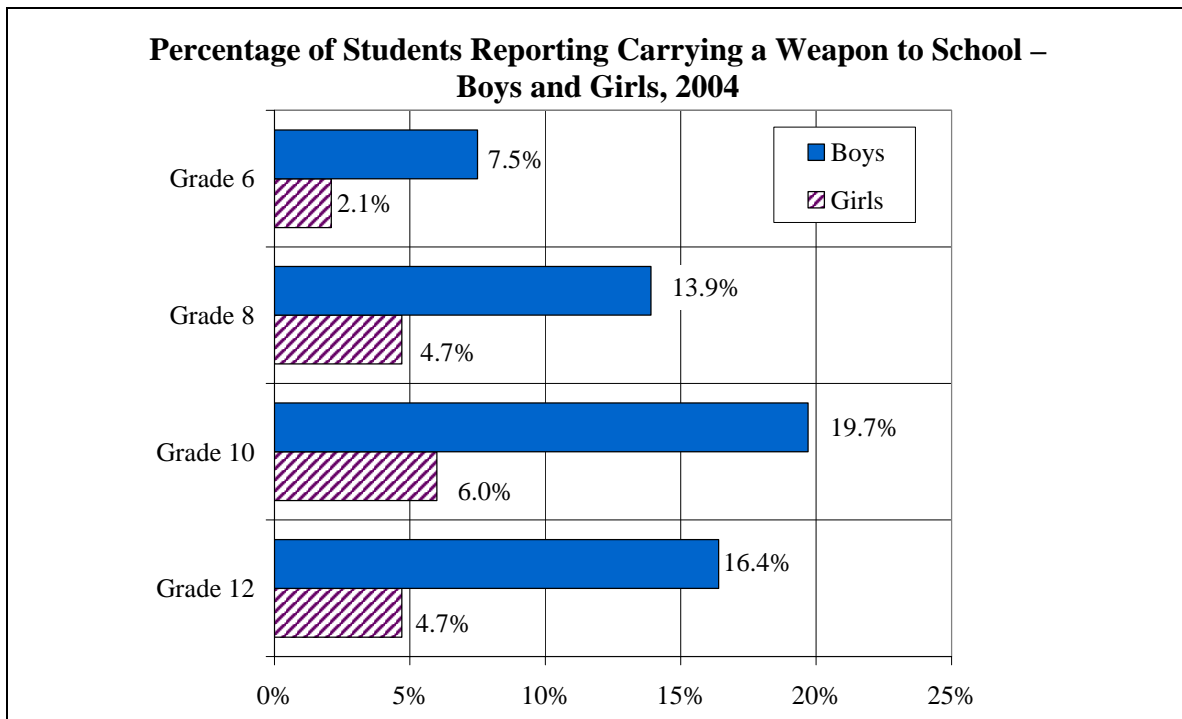


Figure S4

Student Perceptions of School Climate

Students were asked to respond to a series of statements about the climate in their school. All but one of these statements (“Gangs cause trouble at my school”) were phrased so that a “yes” answer was indicative of a positive impression of the school climate. All of the statements, except the one negative statement about the influence of gangs, are listed in Table S5, which reports the percentage of students agreeing with each item at each grade level. (Findings for the question about gangs were reported earlier in this section under “Gangs” and are listed on Page 76, Tables S2 and S3.)

Table S5
Percentage of Students Agreeing with Statements about the School Climate, 2004

	Grade 6		Grade 8		Grade 10		Grade 12	
	Percent	Margin of Error	Percent	Margin of Error	Percent	Margin of Error	Percent	Margin of Error
I feel safe at this school.	87.1	± 2.3	80.0	± 3.2	79.9	± 3.4	87.6	± 1.1
Students of all racial groups get along with each other.	58.7	± 3.3	60.6	± 5.1	64.1	± 4.6	69.3	± 1.8
Student views and opinions are respected and listened to by administrators and teachers at my school.	78.8	± 1.9	63.5	± 3.9	55.9	± 2.5	55.0	± 1.8
School rules are fairly and consistently enforced for all students.	81.4	± 2.0	67.8	± 2.7	59.4	± 1.2	55.5	± 1.4
I feel comfortable telling teachers or administrators about potential fights, arguments, or weapons at school.	71.5	± 2.0	49.9	± 2.6	42.2	± 2.5	50.0	± 1.1
Teachers show respect to students.	89.0	± 1.8	74.3	± 2.0	70.7	± 1.8	72.3	± 1.4
Teachers show they care about students.	88.3	± 2.0	72.2	± 2.6	67.7	± 1.7	71.2	± 1.5
Students show respect to teachers.	73.7	± 3.3	51.1	± 4.1	48.8	± 2.6	54.0	± 2.0
I feel I belong at this school.	83.6	± 1.7	75.0	± 2.6	73.9	± 1.2	73.2	± 0.8

Between 80 and 88 percent of students reported that they felt safe at their school. Feelings of safety were most common among sixth- and 12th-grade students. There appeared to be no major difference between boys and girls in terms of feeling safe at school.

While the majority of students believed that students of all racial groups got along with each other at their school, there was still a substantial percentage who thought otherwise. Between 39.4 percent and 41.3 percent (depending on grade level) of all students said that students of different races did *not* get along together. There was no difference between the way boys and girls answered this question in grades six, eight, 10, and 12. Girls in the 12th grade were more likely to think that students of all racial groups got along with each other at their school than boys did.

Sixth-grade students (78.8 percent) strongly agreed that administrators and teachers respected their opinions, but among older students, this impression was not as strong. More than one-half, however, said they felt their views were respected. There was no significant gender difference across all grades.

Most (81.4 percent) sixth-grade students said that school rules were fairly and consistently enforced, but this agreement declined among older students, dropping to 67.8 percent among eighth-graders, and continuing to drop throughout high school. Just over one-half (55.5 percent) of high school seniors agreed that rules were enforced fairly. More boys than girls, in grades 10 and 12, agreed that that school rules were fairly and consistently enforced. The reverse was true for grade six. There was no significant gender difference among eighth-graders.

Another survey item asked students if they felt comfortable “telling teachers or administrators about potential fights, arguments, or weapons at school.” Almost three-fourths (71.5 percent) of sixth-graders answered “yes” to this question, but the majority of the surveyed students in the 10th (57.8 percent) and half of eighth- and 12th-graders (49.9 and 50 percent, respectively) answered “no.” The lowest level of agreement appeared among 10th-grade students, only 42.2 percent of whom said they felt comfortable reporting potential conflicts or weapon information to school staff. In every grade except the eighth, girls were more likely than boys were to answer that they *did* feel comfortable telling teachers or administrators about this information.

Three items inquired into the relationship between students and teachers. Fully 89 percent of sixth-graders, 74.3 percent of eighth-graders, 70.7 percent of 10th-graders, and 72.3 percent of high school seniors responded that they *did* feel that teachers showed them respect. Girls were more likely than boys to provide this response across all grades except grade 12. The responses to the item “Teachers show they care about students” were nearly identical and the gender difference was the same. About 88.3 percent of sixth-graders, 72.2 percent of eighth-graders, 67.7 percent of 10th-graders, and 71.2 percent of high school seniors responded that teachers showed that they cared about students. The third item asked students whether they felt that students at their school showed respect for teachers. Students thought that they showed respect for teachers less than teachers showed respect for them. About one-half of high school seniors (54 percent) felt that students in general showed respect for teachers in their school. In grades 10 and 12, more boys than girls agreed that they showed respect for teachers. There were no significant gender differences in grades six and eight.

The final item in this series asked students whether they felt a sense of belonging at their school. Most sixth-graders (83.6%) and about three-quarters of boys and girls alike in all other grades said that they did feel they belonged at their school. There were no significant gender differences across grades six, eight, and 12. More boys than girls said they felt they “belonged at their school.”

Driving Under the Influence of Intoxicants

Students were asked both about driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs and about riding with a driver who had been drinking or using drugs.

Riding with an Intoxicated Driver

Between 19 and 28 percent of all students reported having ridden in a car or truck or on a motorcycle within the past month with a driver who had been using alcohol or drugs. Boys and girls appeared to be about equally likely to report they had recently ridden with a driver who had been using drugs or alcohol.

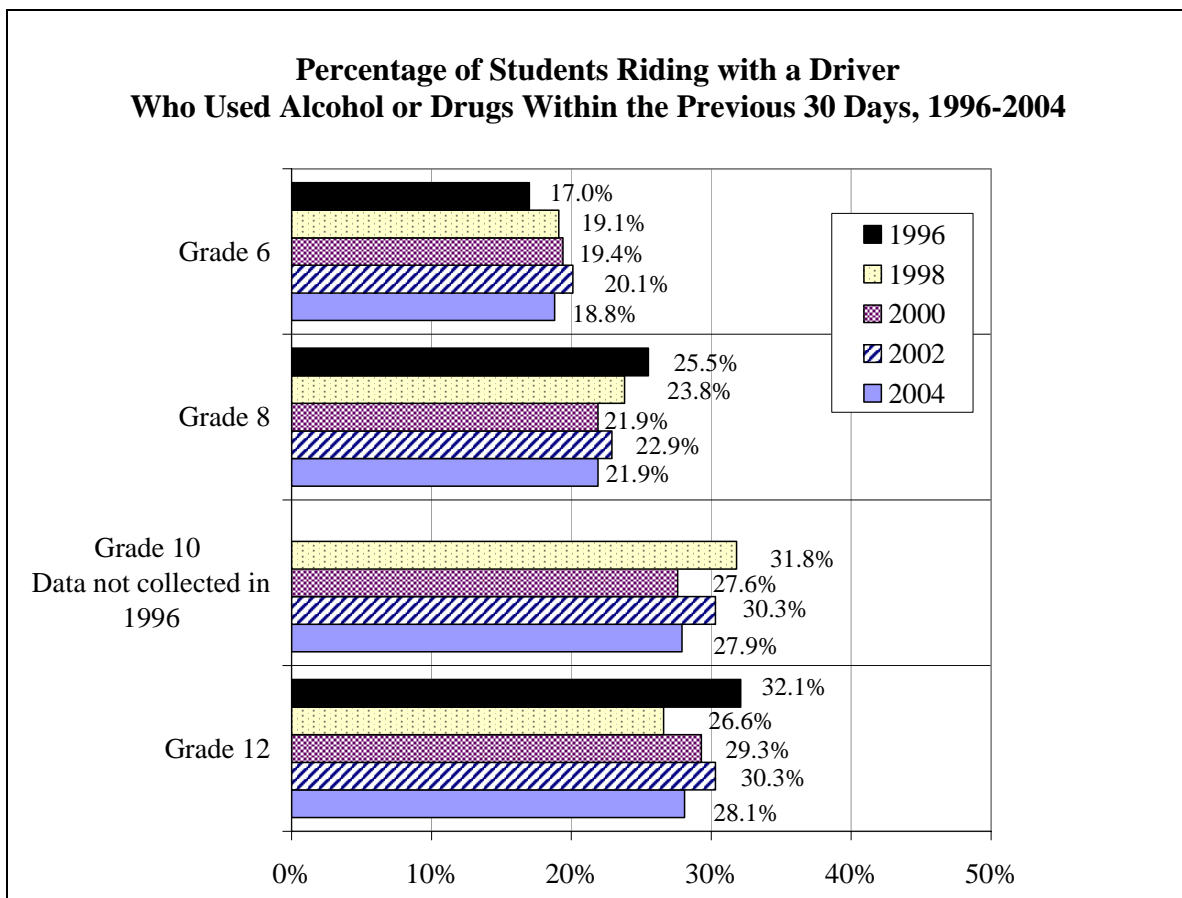


Figure S5

Figure S5 examines student reporting of riding with a driver using alcohol or drugs and compares this year's results to results from 1996, 1998, 2000, and 2002. Taking into account the margin of error (not shown), there was no real change in reporting, except for a possible slight decrease in the percentage of 12th-grade students who said they had ridden with a driver who had used substances (28.1 percent in 2004 versus 32.1 percent in 1996).

Driving While Intoxicated

Students also answered the question, "During the past 30 days, how many times did you drive a car, truck, or motorcycle while or after drinking alcohol or using drugs?" Not surprisingly, driving under the influence is most common among 12th-grade students, who are, of course, the only students who would be legally driving in significant numbers. *About 17 percent of Idaho seniors reported having driven while under the influence of drugs or alcohol within 30 days prior to the survey.*

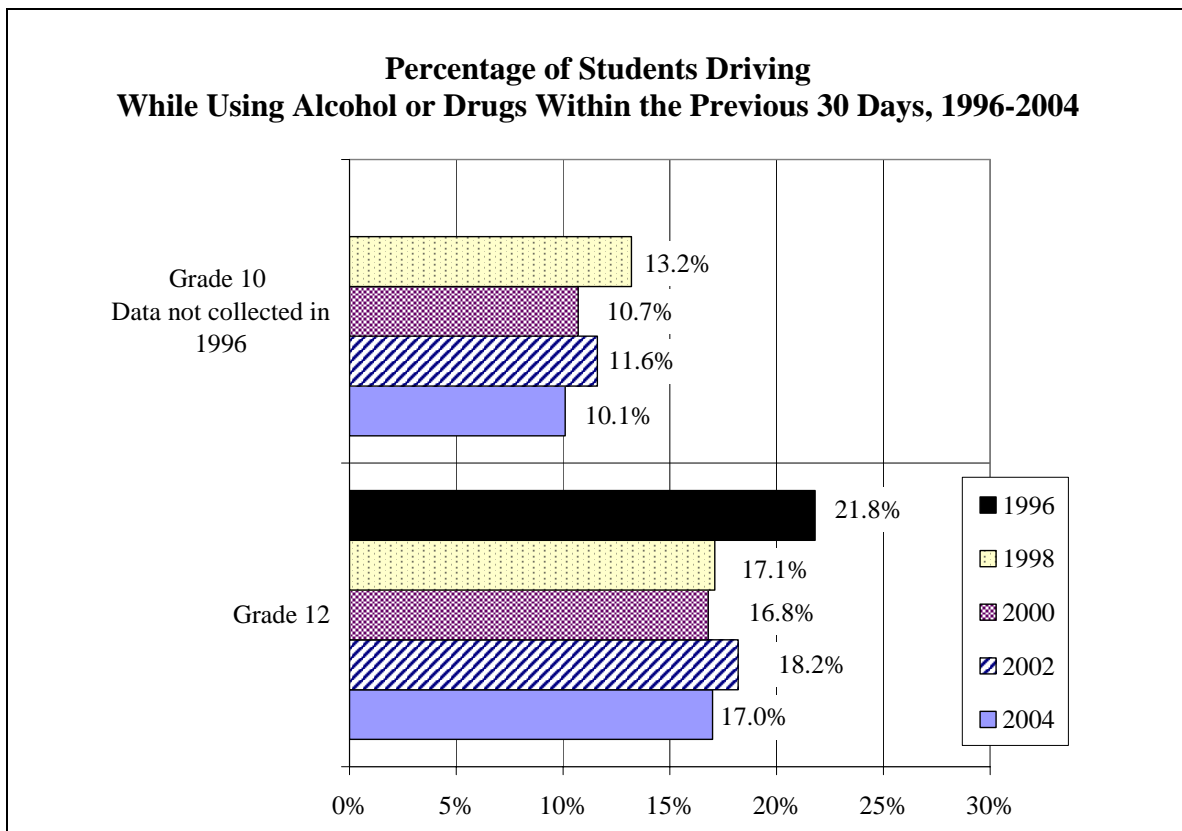


Figure S6